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## MEDIA RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Durham Health Officials Keeping Watchful Eye on West Nile Virus**

*Prevention measures are key to reducing chances of being bitten*

**DURHAM, N.C.** – Although there have been no confirmed cases of the West Nile virus in Durham County, Public Health officials are monitoring the rapidly growing situation very closely.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of August 21, 47 states have reported West Nile virus infections in people, birds, or mosquitoes. A total of 1118 cases of West Nile virus disease in people, including 41 deaths, have been reported to CDC, including the death of an adult in Wayne County, N.C.

The number of cases reported nationwide thus far in 2012 is the highest number of West Nile virus disease cases reported to CDC through the third week in August since West Nile virus was first detected in the United States in 1999. Approximately 75 percent of the cases have been reported from five states (Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Dakota, and Oklahoma) and almost half of all cases have been reported from Texas.

“Since mosquitoes can breed in very small amounts of standing water, it is important to eliminate those sources as much as possible,” said Robert Brown, Durham County Environmental Health Director. “This

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includes sources such as buckets, flower pots, unmaintained gutters, ditches, and old tires.”

There are no local programs in Durham that address mosquito control on private property. To control mosquito larvae, Durham County General Services conducts larviciding of certain public right of way ditches with standing water, but does not have an aerial spraying program to control adult mosquitoes.

Although the county is not permitted to treat privately owned property, General Services’ certified pest control staff performs educational services to share information. This is designed to assist the residents of Durham in knowing how to effectively treat their own property.

Mosquitoes can develop from an egg to an adult in as little as a week. The Durham County Health Department recommends the following precautions to eliminate potential breeding sites around your home and business:

- Eliminate standing water in places like flower pots, discarded containers, gutters and kiddie pools.
- Clean ornamental ponds and ensure that filtration systems are functioning properly.
- Clean and change water in horse troughs at least once a week.

It also is important to keep window screens and panes in good condition to prevent entry of insects into your home and wear long sleeves, pants and socks when weather permits.

Mosquitoes are most active from dawn to dusk, so if you plan to be outdoors, always use repellent containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535 or oil of lemon eucalyptus on exposed skin, as well as on clothing, since mosquitoes will bite through thin cloth. You should remember always to follow the manufacturer’s recommendations.

For more information about mosquitoes and preventing West Nile, visit the CDC’s West Nile Virus homepage at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm), or call the Durham County Health Department’s Environmental Health Division at (919) 560-7800.

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